GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Prepared Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)
General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

for

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Education

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STREET SCENE IN BETHLEHEM (See Bulletin No. 2)

The beggars of Palestine are just as persistent and just as poor as when Lazarus desired to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

HOW TO OBTAIN THE BULLETIN

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Austrian Silesia: The Maiden Aunt of European Nations

AUSTRIAN SILESIA, which contains the Teschen mining districts contended for by Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, is the smallest among Austrian provinces. It is not to be confused with German Silesia, largest of the former Prussian provinces. Small as it is, Austrian Silesia before the war produced more coal than any other section of the Austrian empire. In 1913 its output was almost half that of all Austria. Its coal, farms, sheep and minerals, especially iron, made it a coveted prize for ten centuries.

Stretch Delaware as one might pull a piece of taffy, then cut through the thinnest portion of the slender middle but do not separate the two parts left by the lesion, and you have a picture of Austrian Silesia. The area is less than Delaware, in fact, though the population is three times as large.

Of this population, in 1900, almost half were Germans, about a third were Poles and a fourth were Czechs and other Slavs.

Before the creation of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia as independent nations, to the west and north of Austrian Silesia was Prussian Silesia; to the east, Galicia; and on the south, Hungary and Moravia, with which it was united for a time until it became a separate crownland in 1849.

Hour Glass Province But Remnant of Former Silesia

The two parts of Austrian Silesia, snapped asunder where Moravia juts up toward Oderberg, are but remnants of the old Silesia. The original Silesia was chipped to pieces by civil wars and souvenir hunters at the peace tables, welded by a common appeal to Bohemia for protection in the fourteenth century, and crunched into other shapes and fragments by the three Silesian wars.

Historically Austrian Silesia has been a pallid maiden aunt in the family of European nations. She was the unwilling pretext for war making that involved most of Europe, and the uninterested hostess of famous international meetings.

Despite her rugged exterior and chilly air—for the Silesian climate is more severe because her mountain ranges are tip-tilted toward the north—this rich and friendless relative possessed a fortune in natural resources. So the rising generation of nations in Europe never recognized her as more than a duchy, made her the plaything of flirtatious states, whom she accepted without ardent affection, and upon her demise as a duchy divided her legacy of mines and farms and herds among themselves.

Her National Suitors Narrowed to Two

By the early eighteenth century the struggle for Silesia had narrowed down to two contestants, Austria and Prussia. Thus arose the first and second Silesian wars, really a part of the struggle known as the War of the Austrian Succession. The third so-called Silesian war, a decade later, was a

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Changes in Geography

(Extract from an article by W. R. McConnell in "School Science and Mathematics" for February, 1920.)

REGARDLESS of where geography may get its data, its basic point of view is social. Sympathy and genuine interest in other people which leads to cooperation with them has its foundation in a knowledge of their general surroundings and activities. Our degree of interest in other people is almost directly proportionate to our knowledge of them, how they are living, what they are doing, what economic and social problems confront them, and how they are equipped to handle these. During the war we found it necessary to enter into sympathetic cooperation with other people living in a different environment than our own and one of the chief effects of the war upon geography was to enhance interest in it.

Teachers of geography can ask themselves no more important question than "Shall that interest continue?" Surely it was demonstrated that a knowledge of geography is necessary if one is to keep in touch with the large and influential elements of modern life. Geographic ignorance today means that one is living as a stranger in a strange land. This is not because he has failed to memorize a certain number of facts or principles but because he cannot intelligently interpret the activities of various groups of people.

The field of geography is the social, political and business life of the world. The controlling aim in teaching it should be to know people, to understand people and to appreciate people not as individuals but as groups occupying the various nations of the world.

The teacher of high school geography, realizing that his aim is to teach the pupil to use his mind in working out problems in the fields of knowledge that will confront him as a citizen, should ask himself: "What are the problems which the everyday man is likely to meet that will have to be solved through a knowledge of geography?" Physics is no longer taught for the purpose of training the mind. We teach it for its practical value and trust that in the process of solving practical problems where a knowledge of physics is needed the mind will be trained in a method of attacking all problems of a similar nature. In the same way and for the same ends should we teach geography.

The kind of geography needed is that which will aid in a solution of problems arising in connection with such things as industrial legislation, banking and finance, supply and demand, reciprocity, free trade and protection, and practically all current international questions, a knowledge of which is fundamental for intelligent and responsible citizenship. It is the business and the privilege of the high school teacher to teach the geographic factors involved in situations arising from such vital issues. The problem of Japanese expansion, the Irish question, Polish agitation for Upper Silesia* and Lloyd George's boast that the Allies have annexed six hundred thousand square miles of German territory† are concrete examples of topics suited for the modern high school geography class.

The kind of geography that should be taught in the secondary school, then, should be neither physical geography nor commercial geography but it should be applied regional geography, a study of the geographic factors that enter into the historical, economic and social life of the people of the various countries of the world.

* See "Austrian Silesia, the Maiden Aunt of European Nations," Bulletin No. 1, in this set.
† See "Germany's Reduced Place Under the Sun," Geographic News Bulletin No. 3, February 16, 1920.

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The New Palestine and "Greater Jerusalem"

PALESTINE soon may take its place among industrial nations, and ancient Jerusalem may become a humming mart of modern trade, if projects in contemplation are realized.

One such project is that of building a tunnel from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean, passing under Jerusalem, which would utilize the variation in levels to provide water power for stations along the way.

A second suggestion is to build a new industrial zone about Jerusalem, while the ancient city is preserved intact.

In this connection the National Geographic Society has issued, from its Washington headquarters, the following bulletin, based on a communication to the Society by John D. Whiting:

"Few realize that the manners and customs which prevailed in the Holy Land in Biblical days are still unchanged, even after an interval of 3,000 years.

Villages All Date From Thousands of Years Ago

"The present day villages are located, as a rule, either on the tops of hills, originally for protection, or near some spring or source of water. Many are built upon the foundations of dwellings whose origin dates back thousands of years. There does not exist a single example of a peasant village that has been founded in modern times.

"Many have pictured Mary and Joseph, after arriving at the 'inn' at Bethlehem, and finding no room, being forced to turn into some barn built of timber, with lofty roof, hay mows, wooden mangers, and stalls for cattle and sheep. Such a stable has been the subject of many medieval and modern artists, but it does not present a really true picture. Let us consider the old-style village home that is most common in the districts around Jerusalem and Bethlehem, for that will give us a better idea of what happened on that first Christmas day.

"The village streets are crooked, narrow, and unpaved. As in many of the countries of the Orient, farmers live close together for protection, and not on their lands; therefore, in the villages there are no open fields or gardens, but house is next to house, except for the small walled-in inclosures or sheepfolds through which one generally passes in going into a dwelling.

"The house itself consists of one large room, usually square. The walls, from 3 to 4 feet thick, are built of blocks of stone roughly dressed and laid in mortar, roofed over with a dome, also of stone. The outside of this roof is covered with a coating of mortar made of clay, which, on being pressed with a small stone roller or pounded with a board, becomes hard and compact enough to shed the rain.

Steep, Outside Staircase, Leads to Roof

"A steep, outside staircase, unprotected by any railing, is built up to the roof, for the surface must be repaired at times. The flat, open space of the

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part of the Seven Years' War. After that war, which ended in 1762, Austria was ceded that part of Silesia which now is an object of contention.

At one time Silesia was divided into eighteen duchies. Teschen was the capital of the duchy of Teschen. With less than 20,000 inhabitants, the city's importance arises from its position at the end of the Jablunka pass, main highway between Hungary and Germany, and its situation on the Olsa, which empties into the Oder in the midst of the rich coal mine region.

Teschen, too, is historic, rather as a setting than as a participant. Frederick II, of Prussia, and Maria Theresa, of Austria Hungary, met there in 1779 to sign the peace which concluded the war of Bavarian succession. Prince Albert, of Saxony, had received the duchy of Teschen a few years earlier as a portion of his wife's dowry when he married the daughter of the Austrian empress.

Teschen is 50 miles, by rail, southeast of Troppau, the Silesian capital, meeting place of the Congress of Troppau just 100 years ago, when measures were taken to stamp out Jacobinism which, to rulers of that time, was the equivalent of present day Bolshevism.

Talked Politics Over Their Tea Cups

Even a monarch, if he be a Russian, talks his politics over a cup of tea. Metternich gladly spent three hours over the mystic samovar at a little Troppau inn to bring that political Hamlet, Tsar Alexander, around to signing the famous Troppau protocol.

On account of the revolution of Naples, Italy was the bogey of monarchs who feared the revolution habit might spread. Hence the document which set forth that states wherein the form of government had been altered by a revolution ceased to be members of the European Alliance. Moreover, if immediate danger threatened, other nations bound themselves to employ arms, if need be, "to bring back the guilty state into the bosom of the Great Alliance."

This protocol had an important bearing upon the Congress of Laibach a year later. Even more significant, though, was the beginning of Metternich's influence over Alexander which diverted that irresolute mystic from launching reforms that alarmed the crowned heads of Europe to the formulation of autocratic principles which Russia was not to shake off until the world war now ending.

In Silesia the metal and textile industries thrived. Cloths, woolens, linens, and cotton goods were made. The iron industry centered at Trzinietz, near Teschen. Troppau manufactured machinery and agricultural implements. Organs and chemicals were among other diverse products. Many of these industries were impaired when Silesia came within the range of the eastern front campaign early in the World War.

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Bull-Fighting: Banned in Mexico and Attacked in Spain

CARRANZA'S edict which abolished bull-fighting in Mexico and converted the famous Gran Plaza de Toros of Mexico City into an open-air opera house, and the Ibanez novel, "Blood and Sand," which may be termed the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of the bull-fight, have aroused keen interest in the national sport of Spain.

Charles Upson Clark, in a communication to the National Geographic Society, gives a word picture of a bull-fight in Madrid as follows:

"On Sunday afternoon a gay throng gathers; the bull-fighters march out in their brilliant costumes, and the ceremony of slaying the bull begins. It is almost a ritual, and every detail must be punctiliously observed. First, the bull is made to charge the horsemen, the picadors, who jab him with short-pointed spears; the horses wear a blinder over one eye, so that their rider can keep them from seeing the bull onset. If the horses are not killed at once when the bull gores them, they are sewed up and made to meet another attack. This is the revolting part of it. After enough of this, nimble banderilleros throw their darts into the bull's neck and shoulders at just the proper place and interval. These men, and the espadas (matadors) who follow them, show great dexterity and grace.

"The espada is a seasoned bull-fighter; his function is to plunge his rapier into the bull's heart, and his calmness as he maneuvers the beast into a favorable position, teasing him the while, is fascinating to watch. The audience, with eyes keen as hawks', applaud every good stroke, and hoot in derision at any misplays."

Sport Relic of Moorish Invasion

Concerning the history of the sport the bulletin continues:

"The American speaks of 'bread and butter' as the elemental necessaries of life; but the Spanish equivalent for that simile is 'pan y toros,' or 'bread and bulls.' The sport is a deposit of the Moorish civilization, or lack of it, carried to the peninsula afloat the high tide of the invasion, and left as an unfortunate sediment after the hosts receded. Spaniards and Portuguese implanted it in Latin-American nations—especially Mexico and Venezuela.

"Roman amphitheaters, built in emulation of the stadia in which were held classic Greek games, later usurped by the acrobatic and crude burlesque of the circus, crumbled away amid Moorish bull fights.

"Some Spanish kings practiced the sport. The wizened Charles V killed a bull as a part of his inaugural ceremony, and the ill-fated dilettante, Philip IV, was an amateur matador. Other kings sought to suppress bull-fighting; popes threatened its devotees with excommunication, but by the early 18th century it was thoroughly established as a profession.

Spaniards View Cruel Sport as Drama

"Cruel though bull-fighting seems to most other people, cruelty is not its chief appeal to the Spaniard. Rather he sees in it a drama—a drama, he

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roof also forms a handy place on which to dry figs and raisins, and during the hot weather the family may sleep there at night.

"Entering the door, we find that about two-thirds of the space is devoted to a raised masonry platform, some 8 to 10 feet above the ground and supported by low-domed arches. This raised space, called *el mastaby*, is the part occupied by the family, while the lower part is used for the cattle and flocks. A few narrow stone steps lead up to the *mastaby*, and a couple of small windows pierce the wall, high up from the ground. These, as a rule, are the only means of admitting light and furnishing ventilation to the entire house.

"On one side is an open fireplace, with a chimney running through the wall and terminating on the roof, often in an old water jar whose bottom has been knocked out, and so becomes a sort of smokestack. Many houses have no chimneys at all; small holes through the wall, or the windows, furnish the only exit for the smoke, which on winter days fairly fills the house.

Furniture Simple; Cooking Utensils Few

"The furniture is very simple—a crudely decorated bridal chest, a straw mat, or heavy woven woolen rug, which covers part of the floor, and mattresses with thick quilts and hard pillows, which at night are spread on the floor. The cooking utensils are few in number—one clay cooking pot, a couple of large wooden bowls in which to knead the dough and a couple of smaller ones used to eat from.

"Having inspected the dwelling portion, which at once is kitchen, storeroom, bed-room and living-room, we descend the steps into what the natives call the stable.

"Below the *mastaby*, or raised platform, just described, among arches so low that a man can scarcely walk erect, are the winter quarters of the goats and sheep. To shut the flocks in, these arched entrances are obstructed with bundles of brush used as firewood for the winter. The rest of the floor space, which is open to the ceiling, is devoted to the few work cattle and perhaps a donkey or camel. Around the wall are primitive mangers for the cattle, built of rough slabs of stone placed on edge and plastered up with mortar.

"Often the owner makes a small raised place on which he sleeps at night to keep better watch over the newly born lambs, lest in the crowded quarters some get crushed or trodden down by the older ones. Here he often sleeps by preference on a cold night, for he says the breath of the animals keeps him warm."

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Snakes

"SOME snakes may be very useful about a farm, and western farmers are beginning to evince interest in the protection of a large plains reptile—the bull snake."

Authority for this statement, contained in a bulletin of the National Geographic Society, is Raymond L. Ditmars, who returned with his family some months ago from a curious vacation spent in the Georgia swamps where his daughter captured the most deadly reptile known to that region.

Mr. Ditmars became curator of reptiles of the New York Zoo because his hobby was collecting snakes instead of postage stamps or heathen idols. His collection grew too large, and perhaps too dangerous, for his uptown apartment and he offered them to the Zoo. But the director would not even let them into the Zoo until Mr. Ditmars consented to be their caretaker.

Not that Mr. Ditmars has any illusions about the dangers of snakes. He says, in a communication to the Society:

"A great proportion of snakes has become highly specialized. It is among these creatures that we find the most extraordinary and deadly weapons for the purpose of killing the prey that are possessed by any of the vertebrates.

All Giant Serpents Belong to One Family

"Popular interest is always strong regarding serpents of great size. All of the very large serpents are members of a single family, the Boidae. None is poisonous, and the members of this family kill their prey by constriction—squeezing it to death.

"The largest known serpent occurs in the Malay Peninsula, Java, Borneo, and Sumatra. This is the regal or reticulated python. It attains a length of 30 feet. Second in size is the Indian python, inhabiting the Indian Peninsula, Indo-China, the Malay Peninsula, and Java. This constrictor grows to be 25 feet long and is very abundant.

"Throughout the temperate and tropical regions of the globe are species of serpents of high economic value. These are mostly the members of the largest family of snakes, the Colubridae. The greater number of the non-venomous serpents belong to this family. Our familiar black snake and king snake are members of this family. In some parts of the world the rodent-eating species are protected by law. Distributed throughout India is a large and active species known as the rat snake. Its useful habits are recognized in many areas. This is likewise the case with a closely related species found throughout tropical America. The creole French call the latter the cribo, and in the coastal regions, where the bubonic plague has appeared, there is a fine imposed for the killing of rat-eating snakes.

Tropical Sea Serpents With Deadly Fangs

"Queerly enough we find some of the deadliest known serpents belonging to the same family as the non-venomous species. The Indian Ocean and the

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will tell you, in which the human being is more evenly matched, and the animal suffers no more, than in hunting foxes, or shooting bigger game with the unequal advantage of modern firearms.

"The bull-fight is more than a combat; it is fraught with tradition and ceremony. The procession immediately preceding it suggests a circus parade for its vivacity and color. Mounted messengers, or aguacils, are in sixteenth century costume. They go through a ceremony of receiving from the president the keys to the gate where the bull enters, though usually the gate is not locked. The picador is the survival of the cabelleros who fought on horseback, with lances. From the matador, literally the master of his own cuadrilla or troupe of banderilleros and picadors, to the 'wise monkeys,' as the attendants of the horses are called, the place of participants in line is as fixed as the precedence at a diplomatic reception; and the costume of each is as rigidly determined as American evening dress.

Three Acts to the Arena Tragedy

"Always there are the three acts to the drama. First is the hazard play of the picadors, then the affixing of the darts by the men afoot, and finally the combat of matador and bull. In the 'major league' corridas this last is the real conflict of the tragedy, which has many opportunities for an O. Henry quirk, as when an enraged bull cowed all the matadors and their aides, and terrified the crowd until a resourceful spectator held out some lumps of sugar, which placated him. At least that is a story told of a Mexico City exhibition. But in a great majority of the fights the bull was permitted to gore so many horses, and was so thoroughly tired out, that the experienced matador took little chance in dispatching his weary adversary.

"Bull-fighting in Spain is an industry. More than 200 towns have their plazas de toros. These range from the provincial ones of small size to the great amphitheater at Madrid into which 14,000 spectators may crowd. But all have two features in common, a hospital room for treatment of the wounded, and a chapel where matadors may receive the sacrament before entering the ring. In Spain alone at least a thousand bulls are killed every year.

"The Gran Plaza de Toros in Mexico City seats a fourth more people than that at Madrid. Made of steel and concrete, it cost $700,000. The government's fifteen per cent of the gate receipts on a single day's fight would amount to about $3,500."

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Iceland: "The Greece of the North"

DENMARK recently accorded full sovereignty to Iceland by which the island enters the Danish federation on equal terms with Denmark.

Geographically and geologically Iceland is a part of—a continuation of—the British Isles, for it is situated on the same submarine mountain ridge, stretching from southeast to northwest across the North Atlantic.

Iceland is not a bleak, arctic region, embedded in thick-ribbed ice, though its northernmost peninsula, Rifstangi, projects a mile north of the Arctic Circle.

Island is a Scenic Wonderland

No country on earth of equal size contains such varied and wonderful phenomena. The glaciers of Switzerland, the fjords, salmon rivers, and midnight sun of Norway, the volcanoes, grottoes, and solfataras of Italy, on a grander scale, the mineral springs of Germany, the geysers of New Zealand, one of the largest waterfalls in the world—all are here. Nowhere has nature been so spendthrift in giving a geological lesson to man. If there be sermons in stones, volumes lie unread here. Here we see her titanic forces at work building up a country. Nowhere is it possible to study so well the geological conditions prevailing toward the close of the Glacial Epoch in Europe.

Iceland has another and greater claim to one's interest. It is, as William Morris said, "the Greece of the North." It produced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a literature unparalleled after Rome, before the golden age of England and France, in character drawing, in passionate dramatic power, in severe, noble simplicity, in grim humor. All the characters of the Sagas live and move today. Every hill and headland and valley in the island is full of their presence. The Icelander of today knows them by heart. It is as if every Englishman, from pauper to king, knew Shakespeare's historical plays and could retell them more or less in his or her own words. It has kept the national spirit alive through evil times. It has preserved the language almost untouched by time and foreign intercourse.

Live a Simple and Healthful Life

Yet this literary people still live in a pastoral and Homeric civilization, which is a modern lesson of the healthfulness of human life lived in close contact with the free, wild life of nature, such as would have delighted the heart of Rousseau or Thoreau.

For four hundred years Iceland was an aristocratic republic, ruled by the great families of the early settlers, among whom was a Norse queen of Dublin. A fourteen days' open-air parliament of all Iceland met annually in June at Thingvellir, and the speaker of the law (log-soguman) used to recite from memory the whole of the unwritten, elaborate laws of the country to the assembly. In 1262-1264 Iceland was united to Norway, and in 1380 with Norway to Denmark.

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waters of the tropical Pacific are inhabited by a great number of wholly aquatic, veritable sea serpents that possess deadly fangs and sometimes swim in schools of countless thousands. These snakes have a paddle-like tail to assist them in swimming.

"Another offshoot is the subfamily containing the formidable cobras and their allies. The members of this important subfamily are treacherously deceptive in appearance. Here we have an admirable illustration of how incorrect it is to believe a poisonous snake may be told by the possession of a heart-shaped head. A number of the most deadly known snakes belong to this subfamily.

"Most spectacular of the elapine serpents are the cobras, or 'hooded' snakes. The genus Naja, of India, Malaysia, and Africa, contains 10 of these reptiles, of which the most conspicuous is the Indian or spectacled cobra. Members of several allied genera rear the body from the ground and spread the neck in similar fashion.

"Some of the African cobras display a dangerous habit of spitting poison at the intruder. The ringhals, genus Sepedon, of Southern Africa, is a pitchy black, exceedingly vicious cobra that receives its name from one or two broad white bands that show on the neck when the snake is reared in fighting pose. As the snake arches its neck to glare at the intruder it is liable to eject fine jets of poison for a distance of six to eight feet. These deadly streams are dangerously well aimed.

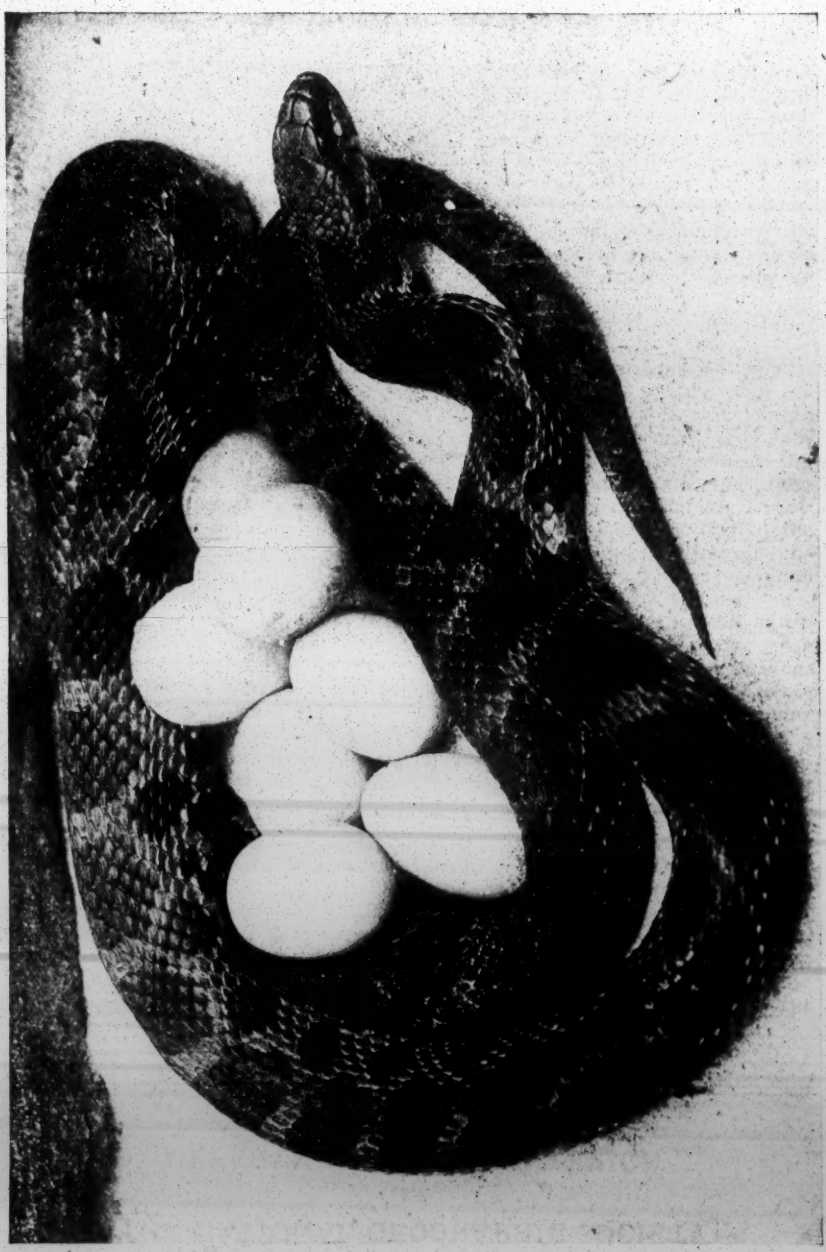
Indian Cobras Most Spectacular

"The Indian cobras seldom eject their venom in this way. They are the most spectacular of their group, owing to the vivid markings on the 'hood.' With some specimens these appear like a grinning death's-head. They are much sought by the Hindu for his snake-'charming' exhibitions.

"In strong contrast to the graceful elapine poisonous snakes, the members of the viper family are thick-bodied and forbidding in appearance. Africa is the home of the typical vipers, and a number of these snakes inhabiting that continent are the most hideously ugly reptiles in existence.

"The gaboon viper ranges over the whole of tropical Africa. The body is exceedingly thick, stub-tailed, with a huge, spade-shaped head. Instead of progressing in ordinary fashion, this reptile throws forward lateral loops of the body and moves along in an oblique direction to that in which the head is pointing. A captive specimen displayed the trait of striking backwards."

Bulletin No. 4, March 15, 1920.



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FOX SNAKE AND HER EGGS (See Bulletin No. 4)

This snake is found in the Central United States. The female snake remains coiled about the eggs a day or so after they are laid. Then she leaves them to hatch without further attention. They hatch in about eight weeks' time. The eggs are laid under big stones or logs.